

## *For the Record...*

### CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCANNING UNIVERSITY RECORDS

Digital imaging or scanning paper university records can be beneficial to your unit in a number of ways:

- Electronic records can be properly backed up;
- Electronic records can be more easily shared with co-workers for collaborative work;
- Electronic records can be accessed from remote locations; and,
- Scanning paper records can be a physical, space-saving measure for large volumes of records.

However, before embarking on a scanning project, there are a number of important considerations.

#### **Legal Considerations**

Consider whether records need to remain in paper form for legal reasons such as the need for preserving original signatures. In most cases, electronic records are equal to paper ones for legal purposes, provided that certain standards are met. In order for scanned electronic records to be considered admissible as documentary evidence for legal purposes, they must:

- Be scanned in the normal and ordinary course of business;
- Be scanned as part of an established and formalized scanning process with appropriate quality assurance, audit, and compliance monitoring measures; and,
- Be used and relied upon for normal business purposes.

If your unit is interested in scanning paper records so that the electronic version can be used and the paper can be destroyed, you should contact [Information Management & Protection](#) (IM&P), which will provide advice on how to adhere to the Canadian General Standards Board's *Microfilm and Electronic Images as Documentary Evidence Standard* (CAN/CGSB-72.11-93)

Units, with advice from [IM&P](#), must design and document processes which include quality control steps to ensure the authenticity, reliability, integrity and usability of the record is retained in the electronic version, as required by *Section 4.1* of the *Management of Information Act*.

#### **Information Management Considerations**

***Back scanning - or "day zero"?*** – Review the amount of paper records that are in scope for scanning and consider whether to back file scan and/or scan files on a go-forward basis.

***Full text searching or file titles only?*** – Review the requirements for searching the documents. Consider whether the contents of all files need to be searched (if so, Optical Character Recognition, or OCR,

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software will be needed) or if informative folder/file naming conventions suffice for file retrieval (less time, effort and storage requirements than OCR).

**Organize and classify records BEFORE scanning** – Ensure the scanned records are filed and stored in an organized way to allow for ease of retrieval and disposition. Setting up a good folder structure using the classification and retention plan will allow quicker retrieval and disposition of records. Furthermore, it is important to develop version control processes and file naming conventions to allow your unit to designate the authoritative record and distinguish it from all other drafts.

**Batch scanning or individual document scanning?** – Review the paper file structure to determine whether you will scan files as a batch or as individual electronic documents/files. Scanning as a batch (i.e. one electronic file) may be the fastest way to scan large volumes of paper but it is important to consider usability. Scanning batches of paper files will increase the file size, which can impact your ability to share a file via email, the time to open a file, etc. Also, batch scanning can impact a unit's ability to find specific pieces of information within a batch file.

**Scanning to enable disposal of the paper records** – When scanned records are declared the Official University Record, they should be scheduled using a Retention and Disposal Schedule provided by [IM&P](#) and in accordance with *Section 4.1 of the Management of Information Act*. In such cases, the paper record can be treated as a transitory record and disposed in accordance with Memorial University's [Procedure for Disposing of Transitory Records](#).

### **Storage/Security Considerations**

Think about where the scanned documents will be stored. If you are planning to store documents on Memorial's network (e.g. file share or IT system), consider whether the information is confidential and who requires access to these documents. Ensuring that proper security is in place prior to digitizing paper records is critical. Consult with [IM&P](#) for advice.

Storage requirements must be considered for current and future storage needs. Consult with [Information Technology Services](#) to properly plan for the necessary storage requirements.